C2

10. (Twice Amended) A sputtering target consisting essentially of high purity Nb: wherein the target has Nb grains having an average grain diameter of 100μm or less, and wherein each grain constituting the Nb target has a grain diameter in the range of 0.1 to 10 times the average grain diameter, and a grain size ratio of adjacent grains is in the range of 0.1 to 10.

C3

18. (Thrice Amended) A high purity Nb sputtering target consisting essentially of Nb containing an amount of oxygen as an impurity dispersed therein, the oxygen content in the target being 200 ppm or less, wherein a dispersion of the oxygen content in the target is within 80%, the dispersion of the oxygen content being defined by the following equation, for measured values in the target:

dispersion (%) = {(maximum value — minimum value) I (maximum value + minimum value)} X 100.

Marked-up versions of the amended claims are attached to this Response.

Please add new claims 24 and 25.

C4

24. (New) A high purity Nb sputtering target consisting essentially of Nb for forming a Nb liner film of an Al interconnection film in applying dual damascene interconnection technology, wherein the target contains an amount of Ta impurity dispersed therein, the amount of Ta in the target being 3000 ppm or less, and a dispersion of the Ta content in the target being within 30%, wherein the dispersion of the Ta content is defined by the following equation, for measured content values in the target:

dispersion (%) = {(maximum value - minimum value) / (maximum value + minimum value)} X 100.

25. (New) A high purity Nb sputtering target consisting essentially of Nb for forming a Nb liner film of an Al interconnection film in applying dual damascene interconnection technology, wherein the target contains an amount of oxygen as an impurity, the amount of oxygen in the target being 200 ppm or less, and a dispersion of the oxygen content in the target being within 80%, wherein the dispersion of the oxygen content is defined by the following equation, for measured content values in the target:

C4 dispersion (%) = {(maximum value - minimum value) / (maximum value + minimum value)} X 100.